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# The COMPASS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS  
130 E. 22d St. New York City



OCTOBER, 1936

VOLUME XVIII, NUMBER 1

SOCIAL SECURITY—MORE OR LESS?

CHAPTER ACTION ON SOME LOCAL RELIEF ISSUES

UNEMPLOYMENT AS VIEWED AT THE  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL WORK

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for*



## SOCIAL SECURITY—MORE OR LESS?

Critical of the Social Security Act, but in favor of "some measure of protection against involuntary unemployment and dependency in old age," the platform adopted by the Republican Party last June was not specific as to its plans for changes. More promising was the Democratic platform which pointed to its record and added:

On the foundation of the Social Security Act we are determined to erect a structure of economic security for all our people, making sure that this benefit shall keep step with the ever increasing capacity of America to provide a high standard of living for all its citizens.

Aware of the limitations of benefits and categories in the Act, it is conceivable that voters might have argued: that the Republicans in a critical mood, and having learned since 1933 that government must develop and maintain a social welfare program, could be trusted to adopt a constructive welfare policy; and perhaps that the Democrats though they had initiated relief and insurance programs, might rest on their accomplishments, leaving the present gaps between work programs and relief, and without taking energetic steps to correct the faults which mar the insurance structure of the Act.

There were differences in the platforms, but not a clear-cut issue.

Mr. Landon has made the issue clear by his speech in Milwaukee. His attack against social security was not a plan for correcting the faults of the present act. He would annihilate unemployment insurance by the familiar ambush of referring it to state action; old age insurance would be scrapped; only old age relief would be retained.

The program of the Association will therefore be considerably affected by the outcome of the elections. If the present administration is returned to office, some of the major issues may be:

(a) Support and promotion of the all-important step taken during the past three years, in which the federal government has established first by emergency measures, and then by the Social Security Act, the principle that the government has responsibility for a broad welfare program;

(b) Continued efforts to supplement the present program by the establishment of a humane and effective relief policy through coöperation by the federal government with state and local units in a general assistance program. Without such provision a great gap exists in the social security framework leaving vast numbers of persons dependent on inadequate or non-existent state and local measures;

(c) Improvements in the Social Security Act and the laws of the states, with particular reference to assistance provisions, so as to correlate in an effective program the categorical provisions for preferred treatment of certain types of need;

(d) General support for extension and improvement of the insurance provisions of the Social Security Act to provide complete coverage, greater benefits and more satisfactory means of assessing the costs.

The Democratic policy leaves the Association working for recognition of these necessary but less spectacular aspects of a sound and inclusive social security program.

On the other hand, the Republican policy as interpreted by Governor Landon in his Milwaukee speech, is revealed as hostile to the fundamental principle that government must be the essential instrument in a program of public welfare.

It seems to be a question of part of a loaf or none at all.

### *On the New Jersey and Pennsylvania Relief Fronts*

New Jersey cities and towns are still struggling with the relief problem as we go to press. Last minute reports included a petition by the New Jersey League of Municipalities for a special session of the legislature to provide further state funds to aid local governmental units to carry on. The city of Newark on September 9th announced that it could not carry the burden beyond the 1st of October. Governor Hoffman has said that he will call a special session when and if he is assured that sufficient legislators will support a plan to finance relief. His previous declaration

for a sales tax indicates that he will call a special session if this type of tax will receive support. Meanwhile the State Financial Assistance Commission, set up to administer \$6,000,000, set aside for state aid to localities from the Dorrance estate inheritance tax, continues to dole out state funds to cities and towns in financial difficulties.

Pennsylvania, operating on the \$45,000,000 fund appropriated at the last session of the legislature, is making valiant efforts to reduce operating costs and this month will witness the first cash grants for direct relief outside of the city of Philadelphia. During August relief was held up for two weeks while the legislature debated the question of returning responsibility back to the cities and towns.



## The Illinois Relief Imbrolio

IN the fifty-six thousand square miles that is the sovereign state of Illinois a kettle of human misery has simmered through the summer months, threatening daily to boil over. That it did not is a story of intelligent action on one side and political expediency on the other.

At the July 9th meeting of the Chicago Chapter of the AASW, a resolution was passed pointing out the chaotic condition of the administration of relief in Chicago and downstate Illinois. The resolution included the following declaration:

To acquaint the federal, state, and city officials and the general public with the importance of the relief crisis and the steps which must be taken, we authorize and direct the Executive Committee (1) to arrange for community meetings and to cooperate with other interested organizations, (2) to call to the attention of the 1000 applicants for blind pensions on the waiting list in Cook County the importance of enacting the pending Blind Pensions Bill, (3) to establish contacts throughout the state with a view to obtaining current information about relief needs in all sections of Illinois, and (4) to cooperate with other agencies and associations in presenting the problem of relief as we know it to the legislature.

The adoption of this resolution marked the first step in an aggressive program of active interpretation unequalled in the records of the AASW. The chapter program, designed to acquaint the people of the city of Chicago and the downstate area with the true facts about what was happening and necessary remedial legislative action to correct the situation, included the following projects:

1. The staging of thirty-six community meetings in the various wards of the City of Chicago where speakers (social workers, shopkeepers, editors, aldermen, state representatives, clients and clergymen) presented the facts in the case and the recommended remedial program to some 10,000 listeners. Petitions addressed to the mayor, board of aldermen, the governor and members of the state legislature drawn up at these meetings were dispatched to the officials indicated at the end of each meeting.
2. A publicity program which included daily releases to Chicago metropolitan newspapers and more than a hundred neighborhood and foreign language newspapers, and a weekly radio broadcast from a local station.
3. A field survey of actual conditions existing in downstate Illinois cities and towns.
4. A thirteen-page report of conditions disclosed by this field survey, a copy of which was sent to the governor, all members of the state legislature, every daily newspaper in the state, together with a resumé of significant findings of the survey embodied in a statement by Grace Abbott, chairman of the chapter survey committee, which pointed out the legislative action necessary to correct the situation.\*
5. Active participation with the Emergency Committee

on Relief for the Chicago Area (twenty-one social work and civic organizations organized for joint action).

6. Effective lobbying at the special session of the state legislature which convened August 4th. This included an audience with the governor and legislative leaders.

The chapter program of remedial legislation as presented to the Governor and members of the state legislature requested that action be taken to:

Release for current relief purposes the accumulated surplus of the retailers' occupational tax and utility tax that is earmarked for relief.

Allocate to relief purposes an additional fraction of the retailers' occupational tax sufficient to meet current relief needs in Illinois.

Provide for appropriations from the general fund of the state equal to the anticipated monthly revenue for relief in order that the state relief funds may be available to the local governments on the first day of the month instead of on the twentieth, as at present. This step will make possible cash relief.

Provide for the payment of necessary costs of administration.

Provide for a central state relief agency with broad powers to set relief standards and assist the local governments in the administration of relief.

Amend the blind pensions act and the mother's pension act in such a way as to qualify for federal grants in both categories.

Investigate the present administration of old age pensions in Illinois and effect needed improvements in this service that will expedite payment of pensions to those aged persons who are eligible.

These points were detailed in a petition, a copy of which was in the hands of every member of the legislature when they assembled at the State House in Springfield on August 4th. Newspaper releases included a recital of the same points. Letters and telegrams to the governor and individual members of the legislature requested appropriate action along these lines.

Faced with this mobilization of facts and public opinion, members of the legislature, many of whom were on record as opposed to any corrective action, were forced to take a stand. In the end political expediency dictated their action. The inescapable fact that state funds were available from an accumulated surplus of collected sales taxes provided the legislature with an opportunity to postpone consideration of other points in the program until after the fall elections.

Assembling after a caucus, members of the legislature voted an appropriation from the general funds which brought the total of state relief funds to \$3,000,000 per month from September 1, 1936 to February 1, 1937. The current laws were amended so that both state and local funds could be used for administrative purposes.

This meant that relief stations in Chicago which had been operated with unpaid skeleton staffs could be re-opened with a paid staff; that new applica-

\* The National Office of the AASW cooperated in this project.



tions for relief could be considered; that a few rents could be paid (about one family out of every five); that employees in Chicago relief stations could be placed under civil service.

While this eased the picture somewhat it was by no means a complete solution. Relief must still be held down to below safe levels, all relief clients must make new applications for aid, evictions will continue, administrative costs must be held to eight per cent of the total expenditure—clearly too low a figure for efficient operation.

However, chapter activity has not ceased. A central town meeting was held on August 26th in Chicago. Contacts made during the period proceeding the special session of the legislature are being maintained, new contacts are being made, mailing lists are being built up, cooperative activity is planned, facts are being collected, newspapers and periodicals are being supplied with fresh data, plans are being formulated for a concerted drive to bring the facts before the public prior to the regular session of the state legislature, scheduled to convene in December.

### ***Your Association's Official Periodical***

Since a new volume of *The Compass* begins with this issue, it seems an appropriate time to consider the essential character of the AASW's monthly publication as it has been shaped by the editorial policy.

The official organ of the professional association is conceived as being more than anything else the reflector of the activities and opinions of the social workers who are organized around the central thesis common to all professional associations: that the concept of qualified personnel for the field should be fostered by those who are themselves in the field, through the establishment of a standard based on a belief in professional education (selective membership) by which homogeneity of background will permit the group to develop and communicate ideas of some growing importance to professional advancement. In view of the conception of *The Compass* as a reflector of the activities and opinions developed gradually through national and local organized channels created by specific national by-laws, it is of some importance for AASW members to avoid the confusion that would result from regarding it as some other kind of an organ. *The Compass* shows AASW members some of the things which they themselves, organized for particular purposes, are producing in matters of professional opinion and influence.

Though no brief is held for the quality of writing at any one time, the content of *The Compass* is essentially a record of the professional social work association's progress in appropriate

areas of activity. These include: reports on the administration of the Association's business as conducted by the elected and appointed officers and committees with the assistance of the national office staff; pertinent studies and findings from national and local Association committees, chiefly in recent years on matters of government social welfare needs, provisions and administration, and on matters of social work personnel standards and practices throughout the field of public and private social work; and reports on discussions and formulations on social work done under other auspices than those of AASW, but significant in relation to the primary concerns of the professional association.

The chief criteria that should be applied to questions about the character of *The Compass* are probably: The degree to which the material relates to the basic and current concern of social work; the integrity of the reporting in terms of the primary objective of the Association and in terms of fact.

In its present stage of development *The Compass* is heartening evidence that increasingly professional social workers believe that they need to find time to devote to their own program for studying, forming an opinion on and influencing the direction of problems that are common to professional social work.

### ***Chapter Chairman Looks Ahead***

The following is one of the interesting recent statements that have been made by chapter chairmen at the end of a year's work. It was in a report by Ray Huff, retiring chairman of the Washington, D. C. Chapter.

Shall sound principles or expediency direct the development of social work?

The rapid increase of numbers in the field of social work has made this question exceedingly important. Work in public agencies has several aspects, with regard to personnel problems, which were less noticeable

## **THE COMPASS**

Published monthly except September by  
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

130 EAST 22ND STREET

NEW YORK, N. Y.

VOLUME XVIII

NUMBER 1

### **Officers**

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Harry Greenstein, 1st V-Pres. Leah H. Feder, Sec.  
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Florence Taylor, Editor, *The Compass*

Entered as second-class matter at the post office in New York, N. Y., under the Act of August 24, 1912

Acceptance for mailing at the special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized June 28, 1924.

Subscription: Non-Members \$1.00 per annum. Subscription of members of the Association included in annual dues.



in the private field. Daily work under the pressure of multitudinous problems exposes the worker to the soporific of expediency. Association of workers is essential to preserve professional life.

The chapter offers an opportunity to meet and develop together the store of vitality that the acceptance of and training in social work evidences is a part of each worker. To have a place where "what is correct" is the basic question and "what is prudent" a secondary question is a necessary possession. The chapter activities provide or should provide such a meeting place. Insofar as each member participates that member is strengthened and strengthens others.

During this year, committee activity made significant development, with here and there a late start. Pressures and fatigues of the daily job were met and in increasing numbers were overcome.

It is clear that the profession needs to recognize the fact that the public in general is not aware of the demands made upon skill and artistry in the social work field. It is imperative that the public know. The natural clientele of the social worker is relatively inarticulate and frequently moves in life in places apart from those who are articulate.

Effective chapter work is the source of professional strength of the workers. All who have participated in this year's activities have benefitted themselves and others, and collectively the profession. It is a matter of real concern that each member continue in chapter activities, and thus provide greater accomplishments in the coming year.

### **Federal Civil Service Announcements**

In accordance with the agreement between the U. S. Civil Service Commission and the national office of AASW a list of chapter chairmen for 1936-37 has been sent to Washington, D. C. It is by this means that members in chapter territory may be in position to learn of examinations announced in connection with positions under federal civil service, even though these may be received too late for inclusion in the current issue of *The Compass*. Chapter chairmen should receive directly announcements of federal civil service examinations.

### **AASW President Visits Chapters**

The Association's new president, Linton Swift, has been on a western field trip during the summer months for the Family Welfare Association of America, of which he is the Executive Secretary. This has made it possible for Mr. Swift to meet with a number of AASW chapters, including Seattle-Tacoma, Oregon, Northern California, Los Angeles and San Diego. The opportunity thus provided for the new president to secure first-hand knowledge of some of the interests and problems of the chapters which are most remote from national headquarters will be of great value in relating the national association's to chapter needs during the coming year.

### **Joint Planning for Public Welfare Personnel**

The Joint Vocational Service and the American Public Welfare Association have begun an experiment in joint planning for personnel in the government welfare agencies through the appointment of Mrs. Ella Weinfurther Reed as liaison personnel secretary for the two agencies.

The working out of personnel practices and good personnel qualifications in the field of public welfare has long been recognized as a difficult undertaking. The help of leaders in the private social work fields as well as the best thinking from officials in the public welfare field is needed in the development of satisfactory standards. As Mrs. Reed has had considerable experience in both private and public social work, this joint project of the JVS and the American Public Welfare Association should produce some worth while results.

### **Facts About New Members**

New members admitted to the Association for the first half of the year (January 1, 1936—July 1, 1936) numbered 715. Analysis of the qualifications of these new members shows that the professional social worker of today is being recruited almost entirely from among college graduates, most of whom have taken their professional training at a graduate school of social work. Those with the minimum educational requirement of two years of college work constitute such a small minority that the educational standard for admission to the AASW would be more nearly in accord with the actual qualifications of those now entering social work if it called for four years of college work instead of the present minimum of two years.

The following figures give some of the most significant facts about the 715 new members admitted between January and July as shown by the analysis:

- 68% are junior members
- 81% are women
- 68% are under 30 years of age
- 92% are under 40 years of age
- 97% are college graduates
- 82% have attended graduate professional schools
- 59% are employed in public agencies
- 38% are employed in private agencies
- 71% are practitioners
- 16% are supervisors
- 7% are executives



There are a number of significant figures here in addition to those showing the very high proportion of college graduates and of those with graduate professional training. A figure which calls for thoughtful consideration by the Association is the one indicating that junior members constitute 68% of the new member group. Though the percentage of junior members whose professional training has been on a graduate basis (82%) is the same as that for junior members and full members combined, approximately two-thirds of the junior members have additional credits in technical social work courses to complete before they can qualify for full membership. In other words, a very substantial proportion of those who join the Association as junior members have only the minimum amount of technical training required for junior membership. This raises questions as to what resources there will be in agencies and schools of social work to enable this large group to complete the additional credits needed for full membership if the present rate of intake of junior members should continue. Besides this practical issue, there is the broader question of whether the temporary status inherent in junior membership is clear in the public's mind. The professional preparation offered by the largest single group coming into the Association is one year of graduate work—312 out of the 715 new members. In these 312 there are 210 junior members showing that a year of graduate work is already a feasible standard for many junior members. Though a year of graduate work does not always carry the full amount of credit required for full membership, only a small number of additional credits usually need to be completed and the student has had the benefit of a period of full time residence which is lacking when professional training is secured in short periods or through single part time courses.

Another fact of interest about new members, as shown by the analysis, is the distribution between public and private agencies, the majority (59%) of the 715 new members being in the public agencies and the minority (38%) being in the private agencies. When the number of new members in public agencies is separated into junior and full members it is found that it is the junior members rather than the full members who bring up the proportion in public agencies for the junior members are employed to the extent of 66% in the public agencies whereas the figure for full members is 44%. Of the total of 423 junior and full members in public agencies, 40% are in permanent public welfare agencies and 60% are in ERA units.

In the field of private social work, case work still produces the large majority of Associa-

tion members as 89% are in the case work field.

The Association is frequently charged with being an Association of executives. This has never been borne out by any analysis of the membership as staff workers have always greatly outnumbered the executive and supervisory groups combined. This fact is again clearly revealed by the analysis of the new member group, 71% of whom are in the practitioner group as compared with 16% in the supervisory group and 7% in the executive group.

The new members when classified by chapters and by the professional schools in which they received their training show wide distribution. The 340 new members who were admitted during the first quarter from January through March were distributed among 55 chapters with 32 in non-chapter territory. In the second quarter from April through June the 375 new members were in 52 different chapters with 17 in non-chapter territory. The largest group of new members for both quarters combined (82) was in the Cleveland Chapter; Chicago was second with 79; New York third with 53; St. Louis fourth with 50.

The classification by professional schools shows that all of the member schools of the Association of Schools with the exception of three (two of which were recently admitted to the Association) were represented in the membership intake during the first quarter and all except one (also a newly admitted school) in the second quarter. The largest group of new members for the six months period had attended the University of Chicago School (103), with the following schools next in order: Western Reserve University, 94; New York School, 65; University of Minnesota, 38; Tulane University, 37; Smith College School, 30; University of Southern California, 28; University of Missouri, 27; National Catholic School, 18; University of Washington (Seattle), 15; Atlanta School, 14.

Sixteen of the total of 715 admitted qualified for junior membership on the basis of technical social work training secured in one of the curricula accredited by the AASW but not in the membership of the Association of Schools. Sixteen others met the field work requirement under the special regulations regarding agency training instead of through field work under the supervision of a school of social work. Ten out of the 715 were admitted to full membership under the exception clause in the membership requirements. With the exception of these three groups totalling 42 the balance of the 715 new members met the membership requirements by securing their course credits and field work at a member school of the Association of Schools.



## *The Cost of Reinstatement*

### IMPORTANT NOTICE TO MEMBERS

It costs nothing but the regular membership dues for a former member of the Association to be reinstated, if he or she has resigned from membership any time in the past. On the other hand, if a member has been dropped, because of non-payment of dues, a reinstatement fee of \$20.00 will be charged in addition to the dues for the ensuing year.

The Association needs its members and wants to keep them all. As some few hundred a year drop out, however, the Ad Interim Committee has taken action on the reinstatement fee, because of the cost involved for both the National Association and the chapters. Part of the reinstatement fee will be paid to the chapter in which the reinstatement takes place. The ruling went into effect beginning with the July 1, 1936 quarter. The only change in present practice is that a flat reinstatement fee is substituted for a charge for back dues from those who were dropped.

In taking action the Ad Interim Committee is assured that it is not imposing any extra cost for membership, as it is never necessary for anyone to be dropped for non-payment of dues. Members are urged to keep the reinstatement fee in mind, and to communicate with the national office in regard to extension of time or resignation rather than to let dues lapse, if failure to pay dues is because of any reason other than neglect.

As explained to each member behind in payment, the Association is willing to provide extensions of time when the matter is taken up with the national office. In cases of prolonged illness and unemployment cancellation of dues sometimes has been arranged.

Although the Association's by-laws have, since 1921, provided that a membership might lapse for three months after dues remained unpaid, a much longer period has always been allowed by the Ad Interim Committee.

Members are kept on the active list for nine months after the first bill is sent and receive six notices that their dues are owing during this period. They are dropped at the end of nine months and under the new reinstatement procedure will be charged \$20.00 for reinstatement plus the current year's dues, regardless of whether their dues have lapsed for only a few days or for several years. During the nine months' period members whose dues are in arrears are given every opportunity to advise the national office if an extension of time would enable them to retain their memberships or whether they wish to resign.

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The Compass has reported from time to time on the experience of the California Conference of Social Work and the Missouri Association for Social Welfare with their established departments of certification and registration of social workers. In July this year the members of the Nebraska Conference of Social Work were invited through their Bulletin to consider the establishment of a similar certification plan under the auspices of their Conference.

## *Joint Action on Relief Issues*

Social workers have experimented with various methods for bringing the relief situation to the attention of the public and responsible officials as one local crisis after another has arisen since the discontinuance of direct federal relief.

The following report of The Continuing Committee on Social Needs, composed of representatives of three associations of social workers in Baltimore, is given in full below as an interesting example of the value of such activity when it is continuous rather than sporadic. The three cooperating associations, the American Association of Social Workers, the American Association of Medical Social Workers and the Association of Workers in Social Agencies, were enabled through the existence of the Continuing Committee to express their opinion and to take joint action on a variety of important issues affecting relief programs, administration, standards and personnel. The report was prepared by Esther Lazarus, Chairman of the Continuing Committee and also Chairman of the AASW. The open letters mentioned in the report are printed following the report.

### REPORT OF CONTINUING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL NEEDS

of  
American Association of Social Workers, Maryland  
Chapter  
American Association of Medical Social Workers,  
Potomac District  
Association of Workers in Social Agencies

At the public meeting held on September 30, 1935, sponsored by the AASW, AAMSW, AWSA and the Maryland Conference of Social Welfare and the Baltimore Council of Social Agencies, to acquaint the citizens of Baltimore with the relief situation, a resolution was passed that the spirit and purpose of that meeting be perpetuated by a continuing committee. Each of the sponsoring organizations was approached as to whether it wished to participate in such a committee. The AASW, the AAMSW and the AWSA decided to participate in such a committee which was to be designated as the "Continuing Committee on Social Needs," and was to concern itself with the problem of interpretation of the relief situation in Maryland. It was further decided that each of the organizations was to have three representatives on the committee and at its first meeting it was decided that the chairman of the Maryland Chapter of the AASW was to be chairman of the committee.



As the Committee was formulating plans there was much discussion of a special session of the State Legislature to consider meeting of the relief needs. It was decided to have another public meeting to further acquaint the people of the State with the relief needs. To this meeting were invited various civic, professional and lay groups. Whereas at the first public meeting it was felt that social workers should present the situation, at this meeting it was felt better to have the situation interpreted by others than those actually engaged in social work. At the meeting held at the Eastern High School, Baltimore, on January 23, 1936, the local situation was presented by the Rev. Dr. Don Frank Fenn of St. Michael and All Angels Church. The national situation was discussed by Senator Frazier of North Dakota who presented the Frazier-Lundeen Bill as one solution of the problem. At this meeting were present several members of the State Legislature who asked what was the program of the social workers and what methods of taxation they would suggest. There was also much discussion as to the nature and extent of the problem. It was therefore suggested that the legislators might meet with the Baltimore Council of Social Agencies who had gathered much information on this matter. This matter was later taken up with the Council of Social Agencies and they felt that rather than meet with the legislators it would be better to issue a series of bulletins giving the history and background of the relief situation in Baltimore and Maryland. A series of seven bulletins were issued and sent to the legislators and other interested persons in the community.

The Continuing Committee then concerned itself with first formulating a program and then methods of interpreting that program to the State Legislature. A program was adopted which was presented to the individual organizations and approved by them. At this time there was formed a new organization, The Citizens Alliance for Social Security. All social work organizations were asked to participate in this organization, which also included unemployed, labor, trade union, young ministers, teachers' organizations, etc. Each of the three organizations of the Continuing Committee at meetings of their membership voted to become affiliated with the Citizens Alliance for Social Security.

The Continuing Committee submitted its program to the Citizens Alliance and this was accepted by them as their program of meeting the relief needs. The Citizens Alliance tried to present this program to the State Legislature. Every effort was made to get a hearing but we were unsuccessful.

The next problem to be considered by the Continuing Committee was the liquidation of the Baltimore Emergency Relief Commission and the establishment of the Emergency Charity Association, Inc. The Continuing Committee formulated a program of standards of eligibility and relief. Social workers as members of the Citizens' Alliance for Social Security had appeared before the Mayor, the City Council and the Emergency Charity Organization, Inc. protesting against the name, the formation of a quasi-public agency (the ECA is incorporated as a private agency but using public money) and urging the adoption of adequate standards of relief. It was felt that a brief should be presented

on behalf of social workers and the three organizations represented in the Continuing Committee decided that it would be well to have the Continuing Committee present this to the Board of the ECA, Inc. rather than have the individual organizations present their own briefs. At a meeting of the Board of the ECA, Inc. held on June 23, 1936 a brief was presented by the Continuing Committee.\* At this same meeting briefs were presented by The Peoples Unemployment League, The Citizens Alliance for Social Security and The Young Ministers Group. As a result of this meeting some of the demands were met and there was a change in some of the rules of eligibility.

The Continuing Committee tried to adhere closely to the original purpose for which it was organized. On two other occasions the three organizations comprising the Committee decided to use the Committee as a medium for expression. At the announcement of the resignation of Mr. Harry Greenstein as State Relief Administrator the Continuing Committee wrote an open letter to Governor Harry W. Nice. When the State Survey Commission, headed by Mr. J. Cookman Boyd, submitted its report, the Continuing Committee wrote an open letter to Mr. Boyd commenting on the findings of his Commission. This open letter received very favorable comment in the daily press.

The Continuing Committee feels that there has been much value in having the three organizations work together. Although there have been many differences of opinion an opportunity has been provided for the exchange of these opinions, greater clarification and clearer thinking on the various problems that have been presented. The various programs adopted were fully accepted by all members of the Committee and were in each instance presented to the membership of the three organizations. The Committee at all times was greatly concerned with interpretation of social workers' standards and approach to the community as a whole. While it is difficult to judge the progress made, the Committee feels that there has been real value in having one expression of opinion and joint action on behalf of all social workers. To many people in the community the various social workers' organizations are quite confusing. They are unable to distinguish their different functions and purposes. The Committee feels that having one expression on behalf of all social workers has helped to dispel some of this confusion and there has been a better understanding of the problem by the social workers.

Respectfully submitted,

ESTHER LAZARUS, *Chairman.*

Mr. J. Cookman Boyd, Chairman,  
State Survey Commission,  
Union Trust Building,  
Baltimore, Maryland.

Dear Sir:

We believe that your report of relief cases issued in the *Evening Sun* of March 5, 1936, does not reflect correctly the actual situation. Study of the dire need and suffering which is prevalent among that large portion of the people of Baltimore on the relief rolls re-

\* This brief will be published in the next issue of *The Compass*.



quires a different method and approach. We question whether, with the kindest intentions, it is possible for the Police force occupied as they are with the duties for which their training has fitted them to conduct an investigation of 4900 cases within three weeks. In 1934 a similar check-up by the Police produced conclusions that, under expert scrutiny, were subsequently proved to be inaccurate. The impressions created by your report may result in the withdrawal of relief from many who are totally without the necessities of life.

Therefore, it would appear necessary that this report and its conclusions be submitted to expert review and study and we urge that this be done with the least possible delay.

Very truly yours,

ELLEN WHITRIDGE, *Secretary*  
Potomac District, American Association of  
Medical Social Workers.

WALLACE DOW, *Secretary*  
Association of Workers in Social Agencies.

RUTH BAETJER, *Secretary*  
American Association of Social Workers,  
Maryland Chapter.

His Excellency Harry W. Nice,  
Governor of Maryland,  
Annapolis, Maryland.

Dear Sir:

In resigning the post of State Relief Administrator, Mr. Greenstein has created a situation, the serious nature of which you as the Chief Executive of this State and we, as his fellow social workers, jointly understand. His personal integrity, his unwavering fairness, his insight into the problems of the people whose needs he attempted to meet, made for him a place which it will be difficult to fill.

Furthermore, up to this time the administration of relief in Maryland has enjoyed a reputation for honesty and freedom from party politics, which redounds to the credit of this State. There is little doubt that the appointee who succeeds Mr. Greenstein will have much to do with continuing the work that he has begun and with the formulation of the relief policy with which Your Excellency's administration will inevitably be connected.

We, the social workers of Maryland, would therefore, like to suggest that the position of Executive Secretary of the Board of State Aid and Charities be filled by a person competent and recognized in the field of public welfare without regard to party politics or the section of the country from which he comes, but on the basis of qualifications alone. We trust, above all, that the person who comes into office on April first will maintain those standards of social work commensurate with the dignity and self respect of people in distress and which are necessary if the rehabilitation of those people is to be ultimately possible.

Respectfully submitted,

ELLEN WHITRIDGE, *Secretary*  
American Association of Medical Social  
Workers, Potomac District.

WALLACE DOW, *Secretary*  
Association of Workers in Social Agencies.

RUTH BAETJER, *Secretary*  
American Association of Social Workers,  
Maryland Chapter.

## HOUSING NEWS

The National AASW Housing Committee has been set up for another year and consists of the following members:

Miss Evelyn Adler, Jewish Social Service Association, N. Y. C.  
Miss Elsie Garfield, Association for Improving Condition of the Poor, N. Y. C.  
Dr. Emil Frankel, Dept. of Institutions and Agencies, Trenton, N. J.  
Mr. Abraham Goldfeld, Lavanburg Foundation, N. Y. C.  
Mr. John Ihlder, The Alley Dwelling Authority, Washington, D. C.  
Rev. John O'Grady, National Catholic Charities Conference, Washington, D. C.  
Miss Jean Coman, Housing Division, P.W.A., Washington, D. C.  
Mr. Sydney Maslen, Charity Organization Society, N. Y. C.  
Miss Helen Harris, Union Settlement Assn., N. Y. C.  
Mr. Joseph P. Tufts, Pittsburgh Housing Assn., Pittsburgh, Pa.  
Mrs. Elizabeth Mills, Charity Organization Society, N. Y. C.  
Mrs. Alice F. Rothblatt, Welfare Council, N. Y. C.  
Mrs. Ruth Brancati, Catholic Charities, N. Y. C.  
Miss Helen Crosby, Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., N. Y. C.  
Mr. Linton Swift, Family Welfare Assn. of America, N. Y. C.  
Mr. Walter West, American Assn. of Social Workers, N. Y. C. \* \* \*

Miss Helen Alfred, the Executive Secretary of the National Public Housing Conference, who conducted a European housing tour this summer, reports that it was a very successful experience. The group of fifteen was composed of several educators, an architect, students of the housing management problem and social workers. They visited in France, England, Germany, Holland, Sweden, Denmark and Russia. Public housing officials of the various countries met with the group and discussions were arranged. A pamphlet which will include the talks given by the various officials and observations of the group is being prepared. \* \* \*

The Housing Committee of the Detroit Chapter presented a very important report in regard to housing in Detroit. In it the Committee suggests that:

1. "... steps should be taken by the local chapter to recommend to the Federal Authorities that every precaution be taken in making recommendations for the securing of the most efficient management possible for the Brewster Slum Clearance Development."
2. "... in naming the Board responsible for the management of the Brewster Settlement, that local representation be made with the strictest qualifications of ability and knowledge of the field."

\* \* \*

The National AASW Housing Committee will be glad to send the following publications to members, without charge:

- No. 1—A Housing Program for the United States—National Association of Housing Officials.
- No. 2—Housing Management—Its History and Relation to Present Day Housing Problems—Beatrice G. Rosahn.
- No. 3—Activities of the Housing Committee, AASW—1934-35.
- No. 4—Services of the Federal Government to Home Owners and Tenants.

Just fill in the blank below:

Mrs. Elizabeth Mills  
Charity Organization Society

1146 St. Nicholas Avenue, N. Y. C.

Please send me the following publications: (check)

No. 1 ☐

No. 3 ☐

No. 2 ☐

No. 4 ☐

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please put my name on the mailing list of the Committee.



## ***Salaries in Private Family Agencies Back at 1929 Level***

Salaries in private family case work agencies showed a definite upward trend during the two years 1934 and 1935, and are now approximately at the 1929 level. This trend is revealed in a preliminary report of the 1936 study of salaries in family agencies by the Department of Statistics, Russell Sage Foundation, in which the salaries reported by the same 164 agencies for the years 1929, 1934 and 1936 are compared. In 1934 the median salaries for professional positions in 20 of 24 groups classified by size of city were lower than in 1929, but this trend appears to have been definitely reversed in the last two years as salaries were higher in 1936 than in 1934 in 17 of the same 24 groups. The median salary for case workers in 1936 was found to be the same as in 1929, and the median salaries of supervisors and district secretaries were found to be higher in 1936 than in 1929.

The number of paid professional workers in these 164 agencies was likewise found to be at practically the 1929 level, the expansion which took place in private agencies between 1929 and 1932 having disappeared with the creation of public relief agencies and the resulting transfer of staff to these agencies. The Jewish agencies which expanded less than the non-Jewish agencies during the first years of the depression are now employing more workers than in 1929.

Other findings of the 1936 study are summarized in a second preliminary report by the Department of Statistics, including salaries by size of agency, hours of work, sick leave and vacations. The data in this second report are based on information received from 241 agencies as of March, 1936.

Results are here reported by size of agency, which earlier studies have indicated generally has a greater influence on salaries than size of city or geographical location. The median salary of case workers in an agency employing two or three workers, for example, is \$1200. The median salary for this position increases regularly with size of the agency until it reaches \$1650 for agencies with a staff of 50 or more workers. The same thing is true for median salaries of executives which run from \$1425 in the one worker agency to \$5400 in the largest agencies, and for case work supervisors whose median salaries run from \$2100 in agencies with 10 to 19 workers to \$3300 in the largest agencies. There is not the same opportunity for comparison of salaries of district secretaries, assistant case work supervisors, etc., since

these positions are found only in the agencies having a staff of 20 or more.

Hours of work most frequently found are 38 to 39 a week (154 out of the 220 agencies reporting this information). A significant number of agencies (26) report working hours of less than 38 a week, indicating a possible trend in the direction of Saturday closing. The agencies reporting the shorter hours are frequently the Jewish agencies.

A scheduled amount of sick leave with pay was reported by 30% of the agencies giving this information, the amount most frequently given being 12 to 17 days and the proportion of agencies having scheduled sick leaves increasing with the size of staff. The most common policy still is to allow sick leave with pay as the occasion arises without any scheduled amount.

Executives in 77% of the agencies have vacations of four weeks or one month and case workers in 58% of the agencies have vacations of this length. Vacation periods of four weeks or a month are more common in the larger agencies for members of the professional staff. The vacation for stenographers in 75% of all agencies, regardless of size, is two weeks, with some agencies in each group allowing three weeks to one month.

## ***Reviewing the First Year of Social Security***

*Excerpts from a Recent Address by  
John G. Winant, Chairman,  
Social Security Board*

**A** YEAR ago, the President of the United States signed the Social Security Act, which provides aid for the needy and dependent and protection against the hazards of unemployment and old age. Both Houses of Congress had passed this measure by overwhelming majorities. It was viewed as a nonpartisan humanitarian measure.

Prior to the introduction of this legislation in Congress, a Committee on Economic Security, appointed by the President, surveyed the subject. The Committee was assisted by a staff of experts and by fourteen advisory groups of more than one hundred persons; these included economists, experts in social science and social insurance, and men trained in government and business. Before the final measure was reported out, two ranking committees of Congress, the Ways and Means Committee of the House and the Finance Committee in the Senate, had this legislation under consideration for over four months. The reports of these hearings contain a combined total of some two thousand five hundred printed pages.

The administration of the major provisions of the act is vested by law in a Board of three mem-



bers. Not more than two of the members of the Board may be members of the same political party. The members appointed to the Board required confirmation by the Senate. Appointments made by the Board are subject to civil service law. As of July 31, there were 971 persons working for the Board. Of this number, 810 have been taken from civil service lists, and the others have been qualified as experts or attorneys by the Civil Service Commission. All initial salaries are fixed by the Civil Service Commission. Increases in salary must conform to the Classification Act. A small exempted fund has been used to employ a single actuary of high standing.

There are those who have criticized this act. That has been true of all social welfare legislation. In order to get a clearer understanding of the objectives sought in relation to the particular legislation enacted, it may be well to suggest certain underlying principles and factual information that motivated those responsible for the development of the Social Security Act.

The ends sought under this measure are set out under three major categories. Public assistance is accomplished through grants-in-aid to the states to assist needy and dependent persons. This method of procedure was necessary because of the inadequacy of state revenues to meet the increasing obligations with which the states are charged. It was necessary to supplement state moneys with federal grants so that the aged, the blind, and dependent children might be protected without overloading state budgets.

Another major section of the measure deals with unemployment compensation. The cost of unemployment in industry is charged back to industry. The precedent for this is found in the long-established practice in accident compensation. The practice of looking upon work accidents as an expense of production and charging the cost against the commodity produced is now almost universally accepted throughout the United States. There is, however, an element of cost which differentiates accident compensation from unemployment compensation, particularly in relation to the incentives to accept protective legislation. In the case of industrial accident, the injured man has common-law rights. In workmen's compensation the legislation is merely providing a more just and efficient system in respect to a cost which already lies upon the employer. In the case of discharge or loss of his job, the employee has no legal rights, and in unemployment compensation the legislature is creating a new direct obligation. Therefore, the Social Security Act does not permit the industrialist operating within a state that has adopted approved unemployment compensation legislation to be placed

at a disadvantage in selling his goods in a common market on a cost basis as against a manufacturing competitor who is operating in a state which has not adopted approved unemployment compensation legislation.

In these provisions for public assistance and unemployment compensation the Social Security Act conforms to the traditional administrative approach of state and federal cooperation. The federal government establishes certain general standards for protection, uniformity, and convenience; and the administration of these measures is entrusted to the jurisdiction of the several state governments.

The nature and scope of the problem of insurance against old-age dependency—that is, prevention rather than alleviation of dependency—demanded a different type of approach. A national system rather than a federal-state system is essential. Two of the more important reasons for this are, first, that satisfactory actuarial bases for 48 different state systems are impossible and, second, constant migration of individuals who would retain rights under several state systems for long periods of years would involve great difficulties. The need for retirement benefits is due to the fact that more than a third of our population today 65 years of age or older is dependent.

The modern problem of old-age security is growing, as the percentage of our population in the old-age group is rapidly increasing. The span of the average human life is lengthening. Yet as the years in which a man might work are increased, rapid changes in technology take from the worker skills he has depended upon for his livelihood, and the speeding up of industry because of physical strain cuts down effective earning years. And yet, if long life is to be a blessing to mankind, expectancy of longer life must carry with it a sense of security.

The public-assistance section of this measure deals with dependency. It recognizes a present emergency need and attempts to meet it. The object of the federal old-age benefits plan for those covered is to lift old age from dependency for future citizens of the United States. It is not a simplified dole system. It was built up on the assumption that a man would receive benefits under it as a matter of right, since what he received was related both to his contributions and to his life earnings. The weighting of the benefits during the early years in favor of older people is in accordance with the generally accepted principles of social insurance.

In measuring services rendered to date under the Social Security Act, it should be remembered that Congressional appropriations have been avail-



able only in the last six months, and that 1936 is an off legislative year. Most state legislatures meet in the odd years.

Under the public-assistance provisions of the Social Security Act, the federal government, in cooperation with the states, is now aiding more than a million individuals with federal grants totaling \$48,000,000.

There are approved old-age assistance plans now operating in 36 states, the District of Columbia, and Hawaii. There are approved plans for dependent children operating in 22 states and approved plans for the blind in effect in 21 states. Increases in assistance to needy aged, dependent children, and the blind have been possible because of this act.

Under the unemployment compensation section of the Social Security Act, 14 states and the District of Columbia have adopted unemployment compensation laws covering 45 per cent of the industrial population of the country. Only one of these states had adopted legislation prior to federal action. Fourteen additional states will consider such laws when their legislatures convene next year.

Besides the activities that fall under the jurisdiction of the Social Security Board, there is coverage for health, consideration for crippled children, the industrial worker injured in accidents, and other phases of federal and state integrated welfare assistance.

The Social Security Act attempts to set up a community method of self-protection. No man can live by himself alone; economic misery in one group undermines economic stability in other groups. The experience of the last years has taught us that awareness of the inter-relationships of individuals and social groups is a requisite to successful living in a modern world. To reduce the hazards of old age, to meet the needs of dependent children, to aid the blind, to mitigate the casualties of unemployment, and to stabilize consumption, the program for social security has been initiated and advanced. We recognize that security is relative. We are not asking that life be stripped of its challenge; we want to lift life from the hazards of enforced idleness and man's last years from the risk of poverty. We want to give the child a chance. The Social Security Act is the first constructive effort by the federal government to join with the states in this widening field of human welfare. Time and experience are necessary to perfect legislation and to insure orderly procedure and effective administration. We want to improve—not to destroy. The Social Security Act, in my judgment, is the most humane document written into law in this century.

## California's Registered Social Workers

The fourth annual business meeting of the Department of Registration and Certification of Social Workers, under the California Conference of Social Work, has recorded experience which is of considerable interest to social workers throughout the country. The following excerpts show both the philosophy and function of this voluntary system of certification:

A few statistics of interest regarding membership status: Since the inception of the registration project three years ago, 2269 applications were received, and of these 1546 or 68% received RSW certificates. A most important and encouraging fact is that only 48 registrations have become inactive; of this number 12 are due to deaths and 10 left the state. Of a total of 44 registrants who have moved to other states, 30 have maintained their standing. Only 26, or one and one-half per cent of those living and still in the state failed to renew within the time limit! Thirteen hundred and two persons have renewed at least once, and 546 of these have renewed twice.

### Finances

The Department, despite the very modest fees for examination, original certification and renewals, which constitute its sole income, has from the very start been operating on a solvent basis. In measure this is due to the location of the Department in the Conference office, which makes possible a dovetailing of the work. During 1935, expenditures totaled \$2488.90, as compared with available funds of \$2794.28. Total income since the inception of the project, from October, 1933, until April 9, 1936, has been \$6905.00, total expenditures \$6159.06. The estimated requirement for 1936 is approximately \$2900, which should be covered by prospective receipts. . . .

### The Examination

The second examination of applicants for registration as social workers was held on November 2, last. A few of the facts are of particular interest.

Of 276 applications, only 116 or 42% were found eligible to take the examination; of 76 applicants for the first examination, only 33 or 43% were found eligible. Two hundred thirty-five of the applicants (second examination) were engaged in family welfare work; of these only 36% were qualified to take the examination.

Of the 122 persons who actually took the examination (27 the first, and 95 the second) only five failed, all of these on the second examination. To those who from this latter fact might jump to the conclusion that the registration procedure is hardly selective at all, let me emphasize the exceedingly high rate of pre-examination application mortality above mentioned, together with the fact that many others do not apply because, from a reading of the qualifications necessary, they are obviously ineligible.

Of the candidates who had completed at least one year of graduate professional training in a school of social work, 49% received ratings which placed them in the highest quarter of the total group; only 9% of those qualifying otherwise received such rating. This result is of some significance with regard to the efficacy of the examination.

While the advice of various professional social service groups and civil service experts has been secured, the



Board realizes that the examinations as given still fall short of the desired objective. It is realized that the terse "true-false" and "alternative choice" answer form has certain disadvantages. Constructive criticism has been invited from the examinees and many valuable suggestions have been received. However, it is somewhat baffling to be advised by some who barely passed that the examination was too easy, and to hear from others who did exceeding well, that the test was entirely "too difficult and exhaustive." One person writes "... false and true questions have a bad effect on me, causing a mental turmoil." Interestingly enough, the person who secured the highest rating, and whose competence is well recognized, was the most critical of the examination's adequacy to test professional ability! Several stressed the need of appraising personality by an oral examination; the Board, however, still adheres to the position that its function is limited to a determination of general and specific knowledge pertinent to professional practice; judgment as to personality adequacy must be left to the ultimate employer. Some condone the absence of questions concerned with ethics; this is an omission which will be corrected as we secure common accord upon standards. Quite a few are impatient with the failure to query with regard to an "all embracing philosophy of social progress." To quote one such devastating comment, "The true and false method of indicating courses of action in complex problems suffers from the inadequacy of a two-term logic. Its presupposes an either-or instead of the dynamics of modern dialectics." The suggestion has been repeated that graduates of approved professional training schools be registered without further ado. This suggestion will be given further consideration; thus far, the inclusion of professional school graduates has been helpful in determining to what extent the examination is valuable as a test.

#### The By-Laws

At this session you are to vote upon a suggested revision of the By-Laws of the Department. The changes indicated grow out of experience to date and are designed to eliminate those portions which had a proper place in the instrument originally but are no longer necessary, to rephrase sections where clarification is called for, to vest the Board of Examiners with definite authority in management and with more discretion in meeting imperative financial obligations, to liberalize the quorum requirement for regular meetings which becomes necessary with the growth of the Department, to raise the initial registration fee from \$3.00 to \$5.00, to provide an incentive for early renewals by a \$1.00 penalty when delay is protracted. Of especial interest is the amplification of Article III whereby procedure is outlined to deal with acts of unprofessional conduct. Careful thought was given to this section in order to provide every possible safeguard to the person charged with such offense.

#### Legislation

This voluntary registration project started with the thought that early effort be made to secure enabling legislation. Your Board as a result of nearly three years detailed consideration of applications is confirmed in the conclusion set forth last year that much painstaking work still remains before we are ready for such legislation. It is in order to restate the basis for this conclusion; the field of social work has not yet been clearly delimited—a number of positions fall in that No-Man's Land which borders on education, health, religion, economics; there is no real accord as to basic knowledge necessary—professional schools are not in agreement either as to the content or duration of their curricula or as to the requisite pre-professional education; standards

have not yet been established by which to accredit social agencies; there is still much misunderstanding to overcome.

#### Accomplishment

... Civil service departments in major counties have been contacted, and their interest enlisted. Very little opposition of a political character has been aroused.

The character of the examination developed, despite short-comings, compares most favorably with selective tests given elsewhere. The second examination was markedly better than the first, and the third will show further improvement.

Inasmuch as nearly 99% of the RSW's are still active, we are justified in the statement that the RSW is a label which has come to have some significance.

A number of important policies have crystallized in judging eligibility of applicants for registration. Among such might be mentioned the decisions to accept academic equivalents only for high school and college education, to limit the concern of the Board to matters of education, experience, and ethical practice, ruling out standards of personality and conduct, to recognize as professional experience only such time as had been spent at social work on regular salary, to rule out experience with a social agency which does not conduct a social service program, e.g., Community Chests limited to fund raising, or again, institutions essentially limited in function to the provision of housing facilities, to accept as minima the standards set for specialized groups as the AASW in medical social work, to make no residence restriction for those professionally trained.

Finally, while it has not been possible to define completely the concept "social work," yet it has been possible to narrow the doubtful areas. A case in point is that of the teacher-coöordinator. Let me quote the reasoning here, since it is generally applicable to many other border-line positions.

"We recognize that the teacher-coöordinator is called upon, in the course of his or her duties, to perform certain activities which could be classified under the head of social work. However, we find that the teacher-coöordinator is *primarily* a teacher, that no specialized training or experience in social work is required for the position, and that no supervision of the group is exercised by trained social workers.

"The same problem is presented as would arise if social workers who in the course of their general duties were called upon to do some teaching, sought to be certified as teachers although without specific training in teaching. . . ."

#### What Lies Ahead?

... Of one thing we are convinced, that social work is a profession when measured by the definition set forth by the United States Supreme Court, namely, "A vocation involving relations to the affairs of others of such a nature as to require for its conduct an equipment of learning or skill or both, as to warrant the community in making restrictions in respect to its exercise."

Our primary problem in the promotion of the registration project as a legal enterprise still remains, namely, to carve out of the general complex of social work those areas which are most definite with regard to necessary preparation in relation to practice. The job analyses completed by the AASW provide an excellent point of departure.

Our next concern must be to determine whether basic knowledge and technical skill in these professional areas are so closely allied as to justify one undifferentiated certificate.



Third, ultimately, it would seem that registration should depend upon adequate pre-professional education plus professional training; for this we must look to general accord as to content among our recognized schools of social work.

Fourth, in preparation for legislation, whenever this step is deemed advisable, we must carry on a consistent and resourceful campaign of education which will enlist general public support. . . .

Under the impulse of a rapidly developing public social service—national, state and local—we are likely to see more professional progress within the next ten years than during the preceding fifty. In building the framework of knowledge—technique—attitude—discipline—our California registration experiment will con-

tinue to serve as a point of reference. Visibility is still somewhat low but we are out of the shallows, and there is light ahead.

At this meeting the Board of Examiners submitted to the Department for approval, the question of publishing in their State Conference Bulletin a list of the registered social workers (R.S.W.) A precedent in professional social work, it was pointed out, had been established in AASW publication of a directory of members.

Announcement has been made of the third R.S.W. examination for which application must have been filed not later than September 1, 1936.

## Unemployment an International Issue

JUST before the formal termination of Dorothy Kahn's two-year period of professional activity as president of the AASW, before the ballot count permitted announcement of the present officers of the Association, she was in London delivering the paper which laid before the International Conference of Social Work America's contribution to the Commission or Section of the Conference which dealt with the problems of Unemployment. She was also the authorized representative of the AASW for the occasion of the Conference. While the serious impressions of her experience are still a matter of news to AASW members, Miss Kahn is already absorbed in the defense of what is left of Philadelphia's direct relief program following Pennsylvania's drastic retrenchments. She is at the same moment engaged in writing her report to the Pennsylvania Commission on Assistance and Relief on the subject of unemployment assistance as set up and administered in Great Britain. The following is a report by Miss Robb of discussion with her on some of the things which impressed her most during her short crowded days in England.

### THE BUSINESS OF A NATION

The social problems brought about by unemployment and the provisions in a program to meet these in the United States having been the subject of the very close attention of the AASW for the past three years, it is therefore of particular interest to the membership to know that Miss Kahn while in London gained access to Parliament during the debate on new unemployment regulations for Great Britain. Outstanding, she says, is the

fact that Parliament which conducts the business of the nation set aside three days to discuss the unemployment assistance program in detail even down to questions of amounts and variations, questions of deduction of income and whether or not a relative in the household should be expected to pay above the equivalent of board and lodging in order to reduce the amount of necessary direct government relief for the family!

The government, in the debate, argued for the liberalization of the then existing program of unemployment assistance provisions and for the liberalization of their application. The Labor Party's opposition was based on its unwillingness to accept the principle of the means test in any assistance program. Although the outcome was a matter of foregone conclusion, enlightening discussion of specific issues lasted for three days before the vote was taken. Categorical provisions persist in Great Britain but some real integration of unemployment assistance and unemployment insurance has been accomplished through the labor exchanges.

From comparative statements of fact and from general discussion it seemed clear that Britishers regard the United States as not accepting the inevitability of the problem of unemployment. The issues in this country they saw as issues of fifteen years ago.

### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Of this, the Third International Conference on Social Work, Miss Kahn says that while definite progress was shown in the conference technique for the meeting of minds it is also true that eight years of planning and such an international issue as that of unemployment should have found the "common language" of social work less colored by the local setting and the form of government in



which it is practised and more capable of being a force for the common welfare of peoples.

Dr. Masarykova at the British National Committee meeting in 1933 said: "The period of preparation in individual countries according to a common internationally accepted plan is at least as important as the Conference itself." Earlier she had said: "I am convinced that the day will come soon when the world will accommodate production to the actual demands of a healthy community. And here a great task awaits the social worker. He must point out and explain the tragedy of many innocent families whose contented existence is suddenly uprooted by technical development or the irresponsible speculation of others." The villager, she said, is unable to survey what is going on and therefore he merely suffers and the life of the community falls asunder.

The general subject of the Third International Conference was Social Work and the Community.

In preparation for this Conference a thoughtful Handbook to studies for the Conference was drawn up by an advisory committee and designed to give continuity and direction to the interim participation of social workers in their own countries. In this it was suggested that social workers fix their attention on the relations between social work of today and the local communities which are in most cases its field of operation. One statement suggested that some present day social workers think of the central purpose of social work as being the recognition, development and intensification of community life, particularly in its local forms; that full account should be taken of this view and that it should be related to other accepted views which give weight to loyalty to family, to state, to church, to nation, to humanity.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT VIEWED BY FOUR COUNTRIES

"The unemployed man is compelled to accept a new status in his community—a status which ultimately implies a change in his individual outlook and in every aspect of his social life. Existing measures for the relief of the unemployed have perhaps been slow to recognize this. It is therefore wise to ask how far existing systems . . . give the unemployed a satisfactory status in their communities." This is a statement from the advisory committee to the Conference with reference to the Section on Unemployment.

##### *The United States*

Miss Kahn in her paper on the broad issue of unemployment and experience in the United States, pointed to the expectation that a large proportion of able-bodied wage earners will be permanently unemployed. In the face of greater

increase in world production than in world employment as reported by the International Labor Office early in the Conference and in the light of what is known about technological improvements in industry, Miss Kahn said, "the work of the world can be done with substantially less labor than is available." This means that "it is essential for social workers to face the problem of the status of the unemployed in their communities as a long time rather than a temporary situation."

"This problem as it now confronts us," she said, "has its roots in the widely held belief that only those who work (with the exception of an increasing group of so-called natural dependents) have the right to maintenance. The persistence of this idea, in spite of increasing provision in the form of insurance and relief, is accompanied by a tendency to believe that any provision for able-bodied workers which does not result directly from their own efforts is bound to have a demoralizing effect on the individual and tends to increase the numbers of such persons in any community. This belief is tenaciously held in spite of all of the evidence with which social work is intimately familiar, bearing on the demonstrable proposition that work is a natural expression of the creative impulse in man, and not merely a result of the driving pangs of real or prospective hunger.

"If this is true, then social workers are challenged to try to modify the social attitudes on which the contrary notion is based, to the extent that they underpin whatever provision may be made for the unemployed, and whatever methods may be used in administering these provisions, with a clear philosophy which would (a) remove the organic connection between work and maintenance and (b) assume that communities have a responsibility which precedes every other governmental obligation to maintain, with a decent standard of living, all of their members, irrespective of whether these members are able to engage in gainful work.

"It is only to the extent that we are able to establish this philosophy that we shall remove hampering difficulties from efforts toward economic planning, and eliminate the paradox of idleness in the face of genuine under-production, as measured by a standard of life for all the people."

In the full text of Miss Kahn's paper her thesis is supported by official statistics and other data from the experience of the United States of America in the treatment of unemployment during recent years in both urban and rural communities.

##### *Germany*

Her paper was followed by that of Dr. Mangels of Germany, the summary of whose



paper is not at hand. However copies of statements offered during discussion from the floor in this section of the Conference by Dr. Hans Engel and Franz Mende of Germany indicate the radically different approach made to the subject of unemployment by the German delegates. They emphasized "the value for the development and safeguarding of the community of those means which Germany is employing in her fight against this world-evil." They presented no questions about their current understanding or handling of the problem. The theme of the utterances of all German delegates, authorized by the German government, had to do with the nation as The Community and the cooperative duty of the individual toward the good of the nation. The success of the present uniform system of unemployment and the new measures since the political revolution of 1933 were substantiated on the basis of figures on increased employment. The German Chancellor's Program for the Creation of Work in the subsidization of industries and particularly in the "Back to the Land" movement was described. To sketch some of the specific provisions: Labor Service ("help given by young men and women from the towns on the farmlands"); inducements devised to promote household occupation for women, marriage and the bearing of children; the scheme of exchange of occupations ("young people have given up their posts in favor of older unemployed people and in exchange have worked in the Labor Service or on farms"); a licensing system for workers under 25 years of age, (conceived as a temporary measure but to be continued, according to Herr Mende, although it "has lost much of its importance through the introduction of compulsory labor and military service.")

Attempt is made, he said, "to direct the whole of the younger generation into professional channels in harmony with the needs of the state." The tendency of the organized unemployment relief is to create work. Work service, land service and the compulsory year in the country are written into the law. The "domestic year" makes it compulsory for every girl to receive one year's training in domestic science after leaving school. As a further means of creating employment, "university students enable factory workers to have a holiday by taking over their work for a time."

Other statements made by the German delegates, such as the following, must also have a disquieting effect on social workers: "the unemployed will be encouraged not to lose heart and measures will be taken in order that they shall not lose the will to work. . . . Relief is given by the state rather than by municipalities so that any suggestion of 'charity' may be avoided."

#### Great Britain

Mr. Ronald C. Davidson of Great Britain in his paper returned to some of the broader issues of unemployment. He opened with a statement on the impact of the great economic depression upon a general trend in collectivism (some degree of redistribution of wealth and an upward levelling of the minimum standards of life) which has not abandoned the basic individualism of the social order (self support conceived as a civic virtue, and freedom of contract between employer and worker.) The impact of the depression since 1929 upon this delicate balance of collectivism and laissez-faire, he said, has been shattering in Germany, United States, Canada and Great Britain. Speaking of the "loss of human quality and waste of life" Mr. Davidson said: "Unemployment causes upheavals in the life of the individual and changes the texture of social life. It changes men's place and work. It sets in motion migrations of tribal proportions. In a depression the master craftsman becomes a wage earner, the skilled man a laborer, women and children go out to work. Old men cannot afford to retire. Wages of any kind gain an added importance. On the whole serious unemployment actually increases the proportion of wage seekers in a community. . . .

"Insurance schemes were far from adequate; the money would not go round. The old vexed problem of basic relief had to be faced anew; and the able-bodied, as always, are the most difficult class to relieve. For one thing they are all of different kinds and no one medicine is good for all. . . . Treat unemployment as a moral or personal problem, as was the way of the nineteenth century, and you are too harsh, even anti-social; treat it as a symptom of economic fluctuations, provide an honorable maintenance for every applicant at or above the lower wage level, and unemployment turns out after all to be, at least in part, a problem of personal quality or adaptability. There will always be a fundamental anomaly in socializing all unemployment, while leaving the labor market free and unregulated as regards entrance and exit or as regards engagements and discharges."

In discussing remedies applied, Mr. Davidson said of the United States: "Since 1933 America has followed suit with her Federal Emergency Relief and her cautious approach to social insurance (not yet in operation). At present the U. S. A. is also going through a spasm of work-relief—a mighty spasm affecting 3,000,000 unemployed. But, like England and other countries, she will, I believe, find that made work of this kind is a fallacy, and she will have to give it up. It seems to have the quality of mercy, but it turns



out in practice to bless neither him that gives nor him that takes."

He outlined unemployment insurance as a most valuable line of first defense, spoke of its cumbersome nature and said that it breaks down under any really severe strain. If in Great Britain unemployment exceeded 30% for as much as a year, he estimated, "benefits would be so small and of such brief duration that they might be found irrelevant to the problem" and "a vast needs service (relief) based on taxation would then hold the field."

A needs service (such as the AASW has proposed for support in the form of a general assistance program as a foundation for other special measures) is required, Mr. Davidson said, at all times. He presented an aspect of the whole problem which has not been felt as yet in the United States. "Having grown used to 'insurance rights' people . . . rebel against the adjustment of their relief according to their resources. In America no such resentment is visible; the workers have had no experience of insurance rights. Moreover the method of expert case work by trained social workers has a far better standing in America than in English progressive thought." Thus he suggested that the principle of qualified personnel to administer relief might offset part of the difficulty.

Of England's present issues, Mr. Davidson said: "We are trying, under political pressure, to dissect the test of need and govern it by a precise legal code. We are finding as every case worker would expect us to find, that all such rules work badly; they are not good enough for some cases but are too good for others. . . . Even generous scales of cash relief cannot meet every kind of human need—a fact which has always been recognized in the best traditions of voluntary and public social work. Least of all do we want these artificial categories of needs. . . . What is wanted is a flexible, discretionary, regional administration in which the local community's good will and wisdom can find due expression. . . ."

Of local community institutions, he said, "We should endeavor to correct their faults and strengthen their resources from national funds" (which applied to the United States would mean federal and state assistance with local responsibility for administration).

#### Sweden

The fourth and last program paper in the Conference's Section on Unemployment was given by Dr. Ingvar Svennitson of Sweden. The spread of industry over country districts and small towns rather than concentrated industry has focused Sweden's attention on the question of how to

loosen the bonds between the unemployed individual and his locality to make it feasible for him to move to better work prospects. This led Dr. Svennitson to outline from Swedish experiences in unemployment policies the importance of distinguishing between different types of unemployment.

Cyclical, structural and seasonal unemployment may be taken as being due, he said, to different groups of causes: "Cyclical unemployment is connected with regular changes in the utilization of the factors of production. Structural unemployment on the other hand, is connected with non-recurring changes in conditions of the market and production, the quality of labor and wage policy." The factors are in operation both in times of depression and of prosperity; therefore either the causes of structural unemployment must be eliminated or their influence neutralized in order to obviate a corresponding amount of permanent unemployment. The various remedies devised, Sweden has found, do not work equally well to offset these different factors in unemployment.

The Swedish Unemployment Committee has proposed to combat only part of the unemployment factors through measures to "influence long-run trend of economic development and measures which will increase both the efficiency of labor and its mobility." Other measures also are considered necessary. No distinct line can be drawn between means of alleviation and prevention, the Swedish Unemployment Committee has concluded, since measures of alleviation either increase or decrease the worker's chances of being reabsorbed in production. "There is an evident risk," Dr. Svennitson said, "that means adopted in order to combat unemployment of a temporary seasonal or cyclical type . . . might affect temporary unemployment in such a way as to make it permanent."

The Swedish Public Works Policy was described as developing on the principle of providing work for the unemployed and avoiding the physical and psychological deterioration which follow idleness—a principle which all political parties have accepted.

Experience in the application of that policy over a period of years has resulted in a transition from a large dependence upon relief work (with wage and employment conditions regulated by special government standards below the local prevailing rate for unskilled labor and with need taken into consideration in the matter of employment) to the extension, in 1933, of the ordinary government or municipal public works in the open market and a modified relief work program.

"In contrast with the principles governing reserve works" (relief work), Dr. Svennitson said,



"it was now considered desirable that from a public point of view works of an urgent nature should have a preference over works of a less urgent kind. No kind of work should on principle be excluded from the scheme. In the choice of work, attention should be paid to the indirect effects on employment. Wages should be the same as those paid for similar work in the open market. . . . It has, however, proved impossible to provide work in sufficient quantity during times of great unemployment, taking into account the many restrictions upon reserve works which were in force. . . . While, on the one hand, the scope of public works under the new system was better adapted to the amount of unemployment in periods of depression, on the other hand it became more difficult to limit its sphere of activity in periods of revival." This experience is obviously applicable to issues that are before the United States.

Sweden's experience in the crisis of 1921-23 showed that skilled workers were put to unskilled relief work, later swelling the ranks of unskilled workers, and trained workmen met with difficulty in resuming their old trades while there was perceptible shortage of skilled workers. "As regards public works in the open market, however, there are possibilities of employing all kinds of workers in their own trades. . . .

"Public works certainly provide a form of relief, but they cannot be expected, save to a limited extent, to increase unemployed men's chances of finding work. Unemployment among young people who have not served an apprenticeship, the prevalence of inferior workmanship, and of unemployed tied to depressed areas, provide examples of one kind of unemployment, for the solution of which other measures seem to be necessary. Such unemployment is most noticeable during periods of prosperity. During periods of depression it is difficult to distinguish such unemployment from periodical unemployment. Clearly one of the most important tasks of economic and social research is to recognize as soon as possible during a depression and the revival following thereon such unemployment, and apply special measures."

#### INTERNATIONALISM OF SOCIAL WORK

National rather than natural economic alignments emerged out of social work's 1936 International Conference. Discussion of the fundamental issues of social work's experience with unemployment crises and programs of unemployment assistance should in time find a larger meeting ground in a view of the welfare of society which is more trenchant than that contained in any theory of nationalism.

In order to realize the values that should emanate from international discussion, social workers may need to develop continuous intercommunication such as would be involved in exchange professorships and the concept of the "ambassador without portfolio."

Unemployment, at the moment a world-wide problem, has this summer had special attention at a conference of social workers from many countries; and additional opportunities for exchange of experience has been fostered in other meetings and in courses and specially scheduled travel abroad. A professional quality of opinion should develop out of an integration of these pursuits with the actual practice of enlightened social work.

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The papers presented at the Third International Conference in London, together with summaries of the discussions, will be published in volume form as soon as possible.

\* \* \*



At a brief meeting of the International Committee of the Associations of Social Workers during the International Conference in London, Margaret Rich represented the AASW.

Miss Rich reported that in no other country have social workers developed their professional associations to the extent that is true in America. The AASW seemed to be the only association among the countries represented which maintains paid staff.

Discussion centered around the possibilities of making the program of this International Committee of Associations somewhat more active in the interchange of material that is available from the different associations. Active exchange and use of such material over the next four years, it is felt, might have considerable bearing on the real interchange of views among social workers at the time of the Fourth International Conference on Social Work in 1940.

\* \* \*

American social workers who attended the preliminary Summer School in London at Kings College of Household and Social Science, preceding the International Conference on the subject of Social Work in Great Britain, report the experience as extremely worth while.

\* \* \*

One complete set of AASW publications and a small supply of free informational folders and of the pamphlet *Social Work as a Career*, were sent to London during the International Conference of Social Work. Delegates to the Conference examined these with considerable interest at *The Survey's* booth. The complete set of material was left with the British Institute of Sociology at their request.

### Books

*Social Case Recording.* Gordon Hamilton. Columbia University Press, New York, 1936. Price \$2.50.

To discuss case recording without becoming involved in a discussion of case practice requires holding to a focus that is difficult for the inexperienced and experienced case worker alike. This is the task which the author has set for herself and consistently through the various chapters she has demonstrated the significance of "diagnostic insistence and constant evaluation."

The development of case treatment runs through the book as a minor theme serving as a background against which the excerpts from records and the author's comments take on clearer and fuller meaning so that the book as a whole gives the reader a balanced picture of what is essential if the record is to have "theme, climax, movement." This historical sketch is nevertheless to be valued for itself, in part because it reveals the author's own point of view, but more especially because it orients the reader to a consideration of recording. The student will find it a brief but comprehensive presentation of the more significant trends and changes in social case work during the past twenty to thirty years.

The literary quality of the work is such that paradoxically it may at first hinder the reader's appreciation of its merit. The simple English devoid of high sounding or technical phrases and the straightforward lucid style with flashes of humor which make more poignant certain comments and reveal a sense of perspective, make a most readable textbook. But its readability may delay one's appreciation of its depth. After a first reading the experienced case worker may purr with satisfaction over the author's insistence that what is important to record must of necessity vary case by case, that no specific rules can be followed arbitrarily, and that "the difficulty is not in recording but in learning to think clearly," but feel that there is nothing new here for her. The inexperienced worker or the student, on the other hand, may be disappointed because he had hoped to find models and "routines which will make the case inevitably clear, accessible and understandable" and finds instead that he must develop his ability to understand the meaning of the client's situation and the significance of the data which he has. The following quotation throws him back on his own thinking: "The client alone can know the meaning of his own life experience, but the professional case record is the writer's attempt to express, as practitioner, the meaning of the case. This imposes limitations at once upon the selection of material." If such readers recognize the emotional coloring in their reactions and reread the book to study it in an inquiring attitude they will find much that will challenge their thinking and will discover that the author has formulated and developed certain basic principles for recording.

Consideration of the several chapter headings reveals the scope of the author's presentation: "Format and Structure of the Record," "The Chronological Entry and the Summary," "Interpretation or Diagnosis and Plan of Treatment," "Letters and Reports," "The Recording Process," "Style," "Special Problems in Recording," "Special Problems in Relief Recording."

The author recognizes that although the social case record like case work itself is more generic than specific there are special problems peculiar to the different fields of case work as now organized, many practical matters are dealt with practically and skillfully related to the major considerations of the book itself of which one may say what the author says in regard to the record, "the meaning of a case for us professionally emerges as it progresses, so that our grasp of significance is dynamic rather than ultimate, practical rather than theoretical."

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